

## **VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

### **IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the paragraph immediately below the heading "Field of the Invention" as follows:

The present invention is directed to a method for processing postal matter and a postal matter processing system which allow staggered postal matter processing and are suited for [sue] use with multiple carriers.

### **IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for processing postal matter comprising the steps of:

providing a receiving station and at said receiving station allowing a customer to deposit a postal item and to enter shipping data for said postal item into said receiving station and, at said receiving station, printing a machine-readable marking, not approved for franking, on said postal item representing said shipping data, to produce a marked postal item, and temporarily storing said marked postal item at said receiving station;

transporting said marked postal item to a distributing station, remote from and unconnected to said receiving station, and providing a franking apparatus[,] and a memory accessible by said franking apparatus at said distributing station, and transferring said shipping data from said marking into said memory at said distributing station; and

franking said postal item with said franking apparatus with an approved franking imprint at said distributing station according to said shipping data transferred from said marking and stored in said memory to produce a franked postal item.

Please amend claim 9 as follows:

9. (Amended) A postal matter processing system comprising:

a receiving station having a storage container into which a customer deposits a postal item and having a user interface operable by said customer to enter shipping data for said postal item into said receiving station, and having a printer which prints a machine-readable marking, not approved for franking, on said postal item representing said shipping data, to produce a marked postal item which is temporarily stored in said storage container; and

a distributing station, disposed remote from and unconnected to said receiving station, to which said marked postal item is transported from said receiving station, said distributing station having a franking apparatus and a memory accessible by said franking apparatus, said shipping data being transferred from said marking into said memory at said distributing station and being franked in said franking apparatus with an approved franking imprint dependent on said shipping data transferred from said marking and stored in said memory, to produce a franked postal item.